

undergraduates, general medical practitioners, hospital doctors, lawyers and police officers to whom the previous texts were also directed? These will still find the book informative and fascinating. The style is lucid and eminently readable, the print is clear and the paper much superior to previous editions. Few textbooks can be thumbed through as bedside reading but for those people not congenitally nauseated by forensic pathology, this is one. It's heavy on the fingers but it rests comfortably on the bedclothes. A word of warning. This book, like its predecessors, contains no toxicology. Those with poisoning in their hearts must turn to the companion volume *Clinical Toxicology* by Polson and R. N. Tattersall.

T.M.

**SYMPOSIUM: PUBERTY AND ADOLESCENCE.** Edited by A. T. Proudfoot. (Pp. 92; 5 figures. £1.50). Edinburgh: Royal College of Physicians. 1974.

THIS is one of a series of publications of symposia held at the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh. This is a short and brief book which gives an up-to-date summary of the diagnostic and therapeutic aspects of abnormalities of puberty and adolescence. It is not possible in a summary of the published proceedings of a conference of this type to do full justice to the subject. Nevertheless, the main function for such a conference is to act as an introduction to the subject and this little volume is an excellent beginning to someone interested in this field. There is a good brief summary by W. A. Marshall of the physical changes at puberty, which is based on the much more extensive volume by J. M. Tanner (*Growth at Adolescence*). There are good summaries of adrenocortical function and gonadal problems at puberty and a sensible discussion of what is perhaps the most common problem, the delayed onset of puberty in adolescent short boys. The book ends with some review of medical services and social services available for the adolescent based on the Scottish experience.

This symposium is a good attempt to bridge the gap between paediatrics and adult medicine, into which the adolescent child falls, and will be of interest to those physicians whose clinical interest falls on either side of that gap.

D.R.H.

**CONTROVERSY IN INTERNAL MEDICINE.** Volume II. Edited by F. J. Ingelfinger, R. V. Ebert, M. Finland and A. S. Relman. (Pp. 829. Illustrated. £7.90). London: Saunders. 1974.

ONE of the major dangers in the path of the mature physician is that of adopting an increasingly philosophical approach to his practice of medicine. This book caters for that need. It probably represents the point of view of your reviewer that he found it very interesting. A reviewer of the first volume stated "the frontpiece should contain in bold red type a warning to all residents who propose to sit for the Boards that they should avoid this book. If he were not confused before reading it he would have a written guarantee for confusion before he finished it." I think this criticism, at least of the second volume, is unjustified. The book is written for the post-mature physician who has some knowledge of the controversies which are raised but who need not necessarily be deeply versed in any one of these specialised subjects. There are two points of view in most controversies and the editors have tried to choose a distinguished proponent from each side. I think the discussions are more interesting in the subjects in which one is not personally involved and this is the aim of the book. Those of us who have research or clinical interests close to any particular controversy will find ourselves aligning with one or other side and the discussion of the controversy itself is probably less helpful.

The authors are chiefly from the U.S.A. and their points of view represent the approach in that country. However, there are many topics of interest to all physicians. For example—is internal medicine obsolete, exercise for the coronary patient, is aspirin a major cause of acute gastrointestinal bleeding, the management of gallstones particularly the silent variety, the management of cerebral ischaemia and others. Two topics in which this reviewer has

personal interest include a debate that all antidiabetic agents have a limited place in management and may be harmful opposed to a view that all hypoglycaemic agents are worthwhile, and the controversy as to whether the solitary thyroid nodule should or should not be removed. It is always interesting to see the evidence for and against one's own particular viewpoint being presented. The papers tend to be discursive rather than brief and the evidence quoted is certainly personal rather than necessarily inclusive. A brief comment by a third party is included in each discussion which is written in the knowledge of what both of the previous discussants have written. As these are controversies there is no final answer in many cases but the presentation of a subject is brief enough to allow the two sides and the comment to be read at one sitting.

Provided one is aware of the danger of self-indulgence in philosophical concepts and can try and identify the real issues from the non-issues this is a useful and stimulating book. The good final year student would appreciate it. The candidate for Membership would best keep clear of it but from then on we are all really part of several of these controversies throughout our professional lives.

D.R.H.

**OBSTETRIC THERAPEUTICS; CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY AND THERAPEUTICS IN OBSTETRIC PRACTICE.** Edited by D. F. Hawkins. (Pp. 594; 55 figures and 2 plates. £8.50). London: Bailliere Tindall. 1974.

IN recent years there have been considerable changes in the whole concept of Obstetric practice, and since the introduction of the Part I examination for the Membership of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists there has been a real need for textbooks on Applied Physiology and Pharmacology. This publication goes a long way towards fulfilling this role. The book is written in a clear and simple style that makes reaching it a pleasure. Most of the figures and tables are self explanatory. An attempt is made to cover a very wide field while still keeping the book of reasonable size but one feels that some of the details recorded are mainly of historical value and could very well be omitted. The section on anaesthesia is very well written and possibly the best in any obstetric textbook to date. That on induction of labour could be revised and emphasis put on more modern trends rather than outdated methods. The way references are presented will be of great help to both postgraduate students and practicing physicians. There is no doubt that this textbook will play a leading role in obstetric practice. The considerably high price and the few errors to be found in it detract little from its value and it should be read by all obstetricians.

H.L.

**SYMPOSIUM: ADVANCES IN LABORATORY MEDICINE.** Edited by A. T. Proudfoot, B.Sc., M.B., M.R.C.P.(Ed.). (Pp. 107. £1.50). Edinburgh: Royal College of Physicians. 1973.

THIS symposium held in the College on 2nd February 1973 consists of six papers, four relate to biochemistry and two to immunology. The biochemical subjects are inherited metabolic disorders discussed by Barbara Clayton, radioimmunoassay described by W. M. Hunter, measurement of drug concentrations in plasma reviewed by L. F. Prescott and computers in clinical chemistry considered by L. G. Whitby. Human immunoglobulins are discussed by J. R. Hobbs and cellular immunology by W. L. Ford. A large amount of information, and sometimes disconnected information, is supplied in condensed form and little previous knowledge is assumed. This leaves little space for discussion of any selected aspects of fundamental theory or clinical application. Often the readers appetite is whetted but left unsatisfied. The symposium is competent and efficient, but rarely inspiring, and some aspects, such as the availability of radioimmunoassay are dating rapidly. Perhaps the claim to discuss advances in laboratory medicine and the omission of microbiology, haematology, histopathology and cytopathology should be qualified.

J.E.M.